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ABSTRACT

A state university and a local school district collaborated to develop an apprenticeship model for field teacher training that benefited all parties involved in the field experience process. The model's foundation was based on experiences working with new teachers in inner city settings. The model was to create an environment that would provide student teachers the growth inducing experiences that would lead them from their first interactions with the schools and children to achieving success in their first year of teaching. The process for developing the model included interactive input and evaluation by field experience students, teachers, and the district administration; central to this process was building trust among participants. Role development was vital, and key roles were played by field experience coordinator, university supervisor, cooperating teacher, principal, and school district administration. The final component involved actual program implementation at various sites. Students were placed at a site knowing that all the players understood the field, their roles, and implications for the novice. The partnership program has resulted in ongoing assessment by the university and the districts. An important result is networking across organizations--students, teachers, and schools learn to share ideas with one another. Appendixes contain a field experience questionnaire, description of cooperating teacher role and expectations, references, and a schedule of clinical seminar topics. (JB)

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University / District Apprenticeship Model Development

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Running head: APPRENTICESHIP MODEL

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Introduction. The ideal collaboration between a university and school district involves working together, sharing and cooperating in a manner that mutually benefits all parties. Often this is not the case because players must be willing to provide a commitment of time and energy that may involve going beyond usual role expectations. In this model this is what we were striving for and did create. We engaged in discussions that provided a basis for our beliefs about what skills a future teacher should have upon entering a school, and how a district could help in molding the future teacher.

Purpose. As we looked at various models, it was important that our decision be made so all involved parties would benefit from the field experience process. Additionally, we wanted the model to reflect who we (the university and district) were, and how it could best serve the future teachers' needs. Thus it should meet district and university parameters and create an environment based on sound research and experience.

The experiences I was gleaning from working with new teachers within an inner city setting (Bercik & Larsen, 1990) and those obtained in working with one specific school (Bercik, 1991) were shared to lay the foundation for expansion of this model. If colleges of education and school districts are to provide guidance to the future

teachers, then our role is to prepare an atmosphere and workplace conducive for them to gain the greatest amount of experiences.

In 1938 John Dewey said, "A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of the actual experience by environing conditions but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth." This is what we were desirous of creating for our field experience students. We wanted an environment that would provide them with growth inducing experiences that would lead them from their first interactions with the schools and children to that point where they were into their first year of teaching and achieving success.

Process. The initial model began with one school in a neighboring district and was proving successful. It involves the interactive input and evaluation by field experience students, teachers and the district administration. Therefore, the principal and I began to discuss how this same framework might best work within his school and eventually the district. This was the beginning of the ***trust building*** which is essential to any collaborative effort.

The process was started by having an all-school meeting involving the teachers and district assistant superintendent. If trust

and understanding are to be outcomes, it is essential that a joint meeting occur before having large groups of students involved at the site. During the meeting the following points were highlighted:

*the university's role in this process;

*the students' programmatic needs;

*the students' course requirements; and

*the cooperating teachers' role

Teachers were provided with time to respond and ask questions. They needed to know how they fit in to the process, and I needed to understand their needs and expectations. At the session's end they completed a questionnaire of intent, interest, needs and concerns (see Appendix A). This material was collated and returned for viewing and future discussion. Based on the questionnaires's results, the first student contingent (four 100 hour students) was sent to the school.

Role Development. During the time students were interacting at the school, the process of role development was vital. Key roles in this process are: *field experience coordinator, university supervisor, cooperating teacher, principal and district administration.* These roles involve a variety of issues that are key to the success of any model and collaborative effort between a university and school district.

Within this district my role was not university supervisor, but

Coordinator of Field Experiences. This meant that I was the formal liaison between the university and school; the university supervisor was the liaison between the university department, students, teachers and administration. It is crucial here to note that although my role was differentiated at this point from the university supervisor it was also one that the teachers needed. They needed to know that there was someone else with whom to talk at the university. Too often the Field Experience Coordinators are "locked up" in the ivory tower of academia and paperwork and unable to (or choose not to) talk with the teachers who are training our novices. This model stresses the need for total cooperation, participation and a ***time commitment*** by the Coordinator if success is to ensue!

The ***university supervisor***'s role is one of support for the student and the cooperating teacher. He/she must explain all parameters and requirements to the field experience students and teachers. This is best achieved by conducting a joint meeting of parties, which we suggest be held at the district office. We did this and found that the presence of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, all principals and Curriculum Director lend importance to the experience and provides a degree of ***satisfaction*** for all concerned. The college students are able to see that everyone is involved and interested in

their success.

The *cooperating teachers*' roles are multifaceted. They need to understand the prior school experiences of their university student, types of activities they have performed, university expectations and their role in the big picture. In this experience it is crucial they understand that although the university student is not in the classroom on a daily basis like a student teacher, the cooperating teachers are beginning the nurturing, creativity and development process for these students. They "set the tone" and begin to provide the structure for future interactions (see Appendix B).

The *principal* sets the stage for the university student and provides the first impression of the school. Just as the principal sets the tone for his/her school, they do likewise for the novice who looks to the principal for guidance and direction. Additionally, the principal lays the groundwork for acceptance within the entire faculty. The commitment to the process and all that is entailed is crucial to the program's success with the faculty. If they find satisfaction and obtain positive feedback from their principal for assisting in this complex venture the results encourage them and others to participate.

District administration is oft-times seen on the outside looking in, but it is crucial to this model that they be involved and

knowledgeable about the process. Due to ***time commitments*** by all involved parties, the district must be willing to allow for sharing and feedback in the process. If a true apprenticeship model is to occur, the district must agree to the overall process, allow for school participation, encourage principal initiative and understand how it will affect their major constituents--the students!

Implementation. The final component involves the actual program implementation at the various sites. The key players involve the students--the future teachers! They are placed in a site knowing that all the players understand the field, their roles and its implications for the novice. The issue here becomes one of acceptance both at the school and within their classroom. An apprenticeship allows for the students to "grow" into their position, allowing them time to find out how they fit into the surroundings which will be evidenced by ***positive results***.

The students were assigned specific buildings by the administration and the principals were provided applications containing student autobiographies. The volunteering classroom teachers were provided the opportunity to choose their 100 hour student based on this information. The students and teachers set up times to meet, discuss the parameters involved and the process began.

The university supervisor conducts bi-monthly seminar sessions at a school and a specific topic is discussed (see Appendix C). The participating school chooses one of the topics for discussion and then teachers volunteer to discuss the chosen issue with the seminar group. This portion is open to any teacher within the building who would like to share their expertise with the novices. It is an activity that helps involve all teachers within the building, thereby providing ownership by everyone within the building.

The meetings involve all students regardless of school site, which allows them to view another educational setting and encourages their colleagues to share turf. Students are able to see the variety of school configurations which creates a continual reflective atmosphere. Although students may be within the same district, the school personality and community may be reflected in quite another way. This allows the preservice teachers to reflect upon these situations and enhances seminar discussions.

As the semester winds down, students begin to prepare for student teaching. It is at this juncture that cooperating schools and/or teachers may request that a student be permitted to come back to their school. No one person is responsible for this decision and it varies from school to school. The rationale for this provides a positive

setting for the students and creates the apprenticeship so necessary for success. Schools and/or teachers are not obligated to continue working with a particular student unless they so desire, and the flip is true for the student. All parties must be in agreement for the relationship to work. Schools vary their configurations in the following ways depending on their school and principal's beliefs.

*Student may stay with the same teacher.

*Student may stay in the same building, but change teachers.

*Student may stay in the same district, but change buildings.

*Student may opt to leave and try a totally new experience.

*Students who have never been in the district/building may elect to do their student teaching in a school based on interest in the program.

Conclusion. The end product results in ongoing assessment both by the university and the districts. The commitment by the schools and their faculty leads to continuous upgrading of the process, shared decision making and encourages a sense of professionalism among the staff and the future teachers. The students learn to work as a team not only with their cooperating teachers, but with the faculty at large. This is not an easy concept to teach and explain at the university, so watching it in action over the course of their year's

apprenticeship allows for understanding of a school's culture and political system.

The networking that ensues as a result of this allows the students to feel competent and comfortable in the "job search" process. In all instances the principals and teachers become advocates for their novice teacher, wanting them to be hired either within their district or a neighboring one. They have helped put the final "icing on the cake" so to speak and are proud of the results.

As is true of any relationship, not all participants have the same success or commitment. The crux lies in the fact that trust and honest communication are paramount to the process. If there is a problem or a mismatch it is handled expeditiously, whether from the university's perspective or the school's.

Students, teachers and schools learn to share ideas with one another. The communication is open to all and by all, thereby creating an important link in the education process. There is no one right way to do something in teacher training, but there are many ways we can enhance and improve the process by sharing and meeting one another. That is the goal of this process. It takes the teacher out of isolation and into collaboration. It enhances collaboration with colleagues in other schools, districts and the university. Everyone becomes a part

of the learning community! As Plato stated in *The Republic*, "Those having torches will pass them on to others" (Davidoff, p.392).

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Appendix A

Field Experience Questionnaire

School_____ Teacher's Name_____

1. Would you be willing to participate in a collaborative effort with Northeastern Illinois University? Yes___ No___
2. After hearing the information explained about the various levels of student programs, in which program would you be willing to participate? [Mark all that apply.]

___EDFN / observation only [10 hours]

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE PARTICIPATION COURSES:

___ECED / 40 hours Infant Toddler

___ECED / 40 hours [ ]Preschool or [ ] Kindergarten

___ECED / 40 hours [ ] lst grade [ ] 2nd grade [ ] 3rd grade

___ELED / 100 hours over a 10 - 12 week time period

[ ] 3rd grade [ ] 4th grade [ ] 5th grade [ ] 6th grade

[ ] 7th grade [ ] 8th grade / self contained

[ ] 7th grade [ ] 8th grade / content area:_____

___SCED / 20 hours tutoring: content area:_____

[ ] 6th grade [ ] 7th grade [ ] 8th grade

___SCED / 80 hours: content area:_____

[ ] 6th grade [ ] 7th grade [ ] 8th grade

___SPED / 95 hours: ___LD ___BD ___EMR

Specify grade level:____ [ ] resource [ ] self contained [ ] REI

STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCES:

___ECED / 8 weeks [ ] Preschool OR [ ] Kindergarten

___ECED / 8 weeks [ ] 1st grade, [ ] 2nd grade OR [ ] 3rd grade

___ELED / 16 weeks / all day

Specify grade level____ / If departmentalized, content area:____

___SPED / 8 weeks per area LD, BD, OR EMR

Specify grade level:___ / Specify area:_____

3. During what time of year do you prefer a student in your classroom? [ ] Both times [ ] Fall only [ ] Spring only

4. In what ways could the university assist you?

NOTE: Please keep in mind that the students are in training and a time commitment is necessary from you. Your needs may change from semester to semester, so you may change your participation at any time by notifying your principal or calling NEIU's Field Service Office.

APPENDIX B

COOPERATING TEACHER

ROLE

and

EXPECTATIONS

COOPERATING TEACHER ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS

The ***cooperating teacher***'s role is multi-faceted when working with the novice. You must know at what level the university student is operating, his/her knowledge of a classroom, types of activities s/he has performed, expectations of the university, and your role in the big picture.

The ***novice*** is the university student who has completed at least three years in educational pursuits and is venturing into the "world of practice." This is, for many, their first challenge for a 'hands-on' experience. Although university students have been out in the schools for prior experiences, this is the first long term commitment involving active participation. S/he is trying to put their theoretical knowledge base to work, and you are the guiding force.

Your role is a key one that helps guide the student to greater understanding of the total picture. It is important, therefore, that you and I show how theory and practice match. As teachers we often forget that our actions and practices are founded in a knowledge base learned years ago, and now we must reach back, share, and compare. It is this collaborative effort that will affect the university student and effect positive change both within your classroom and the future teacher's classroom.

A review of the literature indicates that a master teacher is essential as a role model for the beginning teacher. Although veteran teachers think of the beginning teacher as the newly hired staff person, we should now consider the university student as this individual. The university student is beginning her/his career and taking those first steps toward their goal--BECOMING TEACHERS!

Grippin [1989] indicated that the mentor needs to possess four characteristics: **minimum qualifications** [i.e., knowledge of subject matter, good communication skills, peer respect, etc.]; **effective instruction techniques** [i.e., classroom management skills, effective teaching, instructional techniques]; **educational maturity** [i.e., reflective-analytic skills, self-development programs, and decision making skills]; and **extraordinary skills or service** [i.e., volunteering for responsibility and service within the school, and specialized teacher training].

Noting these qualifications one must realize that your role is a vital one. You will be providing emotional support and encouragement, teaching about the curriculum and guiding these novices through process, as well as providing practical experiences and insight. These characteristics will vary from person to person, just as each university student's needs will

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vary. As the skilled teacher, begin the process by asking questions. They will vary in nature from being thought provoking questions on teaching, to the mundane. Questions to consider:

1. How can I best nurture this future teacher to become a successful beginning teacher?

2. How do I develop my classroom plan? What can and should I tell my university student about this process?

3. When and how do I develop classroom rules? What effect do school rules have upon the classroom rules?

4. How do I know when to move on when teaching a specific concept? Does pacing come through instinct, practice, knowledge or a combination thereof?

5. How do I handle disruptive student behavior? When is a problem too difficult to handle? Am I always consistent? Do I always mete out the same punishment for the same offense? When do my problems become the principal's problems? When are parents involved?

6. When and how do I plan for the week? How detailed? Are plans necessary?

7. How much homework do I give? Who grades it? Do I grade everything? If not, why not? How do I judge this material?

8. Do I hold parent conferences? How do I involve parents in my classroom? Why are parents necessary? Do I just report the problems, or do I have a positive feedback system?

9. How do I prepare for individual differences? cultural diversity? learning styles? Who provides support for this?

10. How did I develop my grading system? How often do I record grades? How do I weight various projects? subjects?

11. Does our district have new initiatives? How do they match the state goals? our school improvement plan?

Remember, these are just food for thought, so feel free to add to the list.

As cooperating teacher you are the mentor, the individual providing support. Although your university student is not in your classroom on a daily basis like the student teacher, your nurturing and creativity are the necessary ingredients to their growth and development. Your attitude about this "other teacher" sets the tone as the university student engages in activities

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with your students. This is an extra set of qualified hands enabling you to assist students you can't reach immediately, and together you are a team! A team your students can count on for help and guidance.

A few behaviors important in becoming an effective mentor follow, but remember this is limited, so add your own, share them and help others become effective mentors.

MENTOR BEHAVIORS

Classroom Guidance

*Provide knowledge about school policies
*Provide knowledge about school curriculum
*Provide knowledge about student needs
*Provide knowledge about the subject matter
*Model techniques that are helpful with special needs students
*Encourage and provide student interactions daily
*Invite university student to participate in planning activities
*Invite university student to read or share something with the students daily
*Impart your wisdom

Emotional Support

*Provide constructive feedback on a regular basis
*Exhibit confidence in your university student
*Take time to listen
*Treat the university student as an adult, partner, teacher
*Help find solutions to problems
*Support the university student in risk taking

Practical Aspects

*Support collaborative projects of the university student
*Recommend activities to broaden growth and development
*Encourage interactions / class visitations of other staff members (i.e., PE/art/media/special needs students)
*Inform the university student about the nature of the school population, faculty and community
*Provide positive feedback on a regular basis
*Share ideas on record keeping, paper grading, special activities, holidays, etc.

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APPENDIX C

CLINICAL SEMINAR TOPICS

The following topics were chosen in conjunction with the teachers, principal, teacher coordinator, and university supervisor. University students and teachers will be discussing these topics in a joint effort during the clinical semester, so be prepared to discuss these issues and ask relevant questions. Now is the time to begin thinking of yourself as the future teacher and how you should or will be addressing these issues within your future classroom.

August 31	SESSION ONE	INTRODUCTIONS OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS
September 14	SESSION TWO	CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE ISSUES
September 28	SESSION THREE	LESSON PLAN DEVELOPMENT (long & short range planning)
October 12	SESSION FOUR	PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT (grade reporting & conferencing)
October 26	SESSION FIVE	THE SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD IN THE CLASSROOM PUBLIC LAW 94-142/TEACHING STRATEGIES
November 9	SESSION SIX	TECHNOLOGY IN THE SCHOOL: HOW DO WE USE IT?
November 30	SESSION SEVEN	STUDENT ASSESSMENT/PORTFOLIOS: WHY AND HOW DO WE USE IT?
December 7	SESSION EIGHT	CONTENT AREAS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: COMPARE AND CONTRAST/INTEGRATING THE CURRICULUM